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May 19, 2006

Robert Schneider, Chair  
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board  
11020 Sun Center Drive #200  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6114

**RE: Tentative Conditional Waivers of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges  
from Irrigated Lands—Proposed Orders**

Dear Chairman Schneider:

On behalf of its 30 member counties, the Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC) appreciates this opportunity to provide comments on the Tentative Conditional Waivers of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Irrigated Lands (waivers), released by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) on April 19, 2006, which is scheduled for hearing on June 22, 2006. RCRC appreciates the efforts of the CVRWQCB to work with effected stakeholders in formulating the waivers, and offers the following comments in response.

RCRC is concerned that no economic impact analysis has been released for public comment so that dischargers covered by the waivers can assess associated compliance costs. The additional monitoring and reporting requirements imposed in the waivers both for individual dischargers and for coalition groups will undoubtedly necessitate increased staff time and result in higher compliance costs for dischargers. Typically, such cost increases are disproportionately higher for small rural dischargers. This is especially true of public agencies such as water districts, which are now covered by the waivers, due to their small population base and unique funding challenges. As the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) also considers a waiver fee increase, we are concerned that small dischargers will not be able to sufficiently recover the increased costs. RCRC asks that an economic analysis assessing the compliance costs associated with the waivers be provided to the public for comment before the June 22 hearing.

RCRC also feels that the implementation time frame for the waivers is much too short. There is a nine day period between the final hearing date and the effective date of the waivers, with no specified interim implementation period. It is unreasonable to enforce provisions of the waivers without allowing time for effected dischargers to successfully execute the new requirements. The waivers should include a stay of enforcement for at least 90 days, which would coincide with the due date for Coalition Groups to submit member lists, so that dischargers can update their programs to successfully implement the new requirements.

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Thank you for consideration of these comments. Please feel free to contact me at (916) 447-4806 if you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Staci Heaton", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Staci Heaton  
Director of Regulatory Affairs

CC: Members, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board  
William A. Croyle, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board